

In the Claims:

Please cancel the original Claims 1-13, and add the following Claims as set forth below:

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled)

14. (New) An apparatus for collection of at least one soft tissue sample from a surgical patient, said apparatus comprising:

a rotatable elongated piercing element, said piercing element having a sharpened distal end and a port proximal thereto for receiving a tissue mass; and

an elongated cutter disposed within said piercing element, for harvesting a tissue mass received within said port of said piercing element;

wherein said elongated cutter is adapted to translate and rotate within said elongated piercing element, and wherein rotation of said elongated piercing element is operatively associated with rotation of said cutter.

15. (New) The apparatus of Claim 14 further comprising a control unit for controlling rotation of said piercing element.

16. (New) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein multiple samples can be obtained about a longitudinal axis of said piercing element without manually rotating said piercing element.

17. (New) The apparatus of Claim 14 wherein rotation of said cutter affects rotation of said piercing element.

18. (New) The apparatus of Claim 14 comprising a device for automatically rotating said piercing element after severing a sample.

19. (New) The apparatus of Claim 18 wherein said device for automatically rotating said piercing element is at least partially disposed on said cutter.

20. (New) The apparatus of Claim 18 further comprising a control unit for activating said device for automatically rotating said piercing element.

21. (New) A method for rotating a biopsy probe about a longitudinal axis thereof comprising the steps of:

providing a biopsy probe comprising an elongated piercing element having a sharpened distal end and a port proximal thereto, and an elongated tubular cutter disposed coaxially and slidably within a lumen of said piercing element; and

rotating said piercing element in association with rotation of said cutter.

22. (New) The method of Claim 21 comprising the step of rotating said piercing element a predetermined number of degrees in association with motion of said cutter.

23. (New) The method of Claim 21 comprising rotating said cutter a predetermined number of degrees to affect rotation of said piercing element.

24. (New) The method of Claim 21 comprising the steps of:

covering said port of said piercing element by advancing said cutter to a first distal position;

inserting said piercing element within a patient;

exposing said port of said piercing element by withdrawing said cutter to a first proximal position;

drawing tissue into said port of said piercing element;

advancing said cutter distally to sever tissue;

rotating said cutter a predetermined number of degrees after severing tissue to affect rotation of said piercing element.